

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

OMB-01 SAB-01 SAM-01 /071 W
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R 130705Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1173

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 0041

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR XF QA LE

SUBJ: QATARI REACTION TO CURRENT SITUATION IN LEBANON

1. SUMMARY: QATARIS HAVE REACTED WITH UNUSUAL SHARPNESS TO INTENSIFICATION OF LEBANESE CONFLICT. LOCAL NEWSPAPER HAS LAUNCHED APPEAL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS WITH CLEAR ONE-SIDED AND CONFESSIONAL OVERTONES. GOQ, THOUGH SINCERELY WISHING TO REMAIN NON-INVOLVED, HAS BEEN STIMULATED BY BLOCKADE OF TEL ZA'TAR CAMP TO AID DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY PLO IN LEBANON. ATMOSPHERE AMONG PALESTINIAN AND LEBANESE EXPATRIATE COMMUNITIES AND THEIR QATARI ASSOCIATES INCREASINGLY SOUR. END SUMMARY

2. DURING PAST FEW DAYS, THERE HAS BEEN SHARP AND UNUSUAL PUBLIC REACTION IN QATAR TO INTENSIFIED FIGHTING IN LEBANON, AND
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PARTICULARLY TO BLOCKADE OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMP, TEL ZA'TAR.

3. JAN 7 EDITION OF DOHA DAILY "AL ARAB" ISSUED APPEAL ON ITS OWN BEHALF FOR FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM QATARIS AND OTHER "ARAB BROTHERS" FOR "NASSERIST MILITARY INDEPENDENT FRONT" WHICH, ACCORDING APPEAL, WAS BACKING "NATIONAL FORCES" IN LEBANON AGAINST "REACTIONARY GROUPS WHICH SUPPORTED BY WESTERN AND AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES". APPEAL ALLEGED THAT "NATIONAL LEBANESE FORCES" FIGHTING TO PREVENT LEBANON FROM BECOMING "BRIDGEHEAD FOR ISRAEL AND HEADQUARTERS OF IMPERIALIST POWERS AGAINST ARAB WORLD". LEBANESE "REACTIONARY" GROUPS NAMED AS PHALANGISTS, CHAMOUNISTS, CEDAR GUARDIANS AND ZAGHORTA ARMY, WHICH REPORTEDLY RECEIVING DAILY SHIPMENTS OF AMMUNITION BY SEA WHILE "NATIONAL FORCES" HAVING TO FIGHT WITH WHATEVER ARMS AVAILABLE. APPEAL ALSO HAD STRONG CONFESSIONAL TONE CALLING ON ARABS AND QATARIS TO CONTRIBUTE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THEIR BROTHERS "WHO FIGHT FOR PAN ARABISM AND ISLAM". PLO ALSO MENTIONED AS WORTHY OF SUPPORT.

4. ON SAME DAY PAPER ALSO CARRIED PLO ANNOUNCEMENT ACCUSING LEBANESE "REACTIONARY GROUPS" OF BESIEGING TEL ZA'TAR CAMP "WITH APPROVAL OF PRESIDENTIAL PALACE" DESPITE EFFORTS OF LEBANESE NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND PLO TO NEGOTIATE LIFTING OF BLOCKADE. ACCORDING ANNOUNCEMENT, CONTACTS WERE MADE WITH PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER, ARMED FORCES COMMANDER, MARONITE PATRIARCH, MUFTI AL SADR, COORDINATION COMMITTEE, AS WELL AS DIRECTLY WITH "REACTIONARY GROUPS", ALL TO NO AVAIL. ANNOUNCEMENT ACCUSES THE MARONITE LEADERSHIP OF MOUNTING SEIGE WITH EXPRESS PURPOSE OF DRAWING PALESTINIANS INTO CURRENT CONFLICT. PLO STATEMENT APPEALING FOR MATERIAL AID HAS ALSO BEEN BROADCAST ON GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED QATARI TV.

5. PRESS JAN 11 FRONT-PAGED PLO ANNOUNCEMENT THAT AMIR HAD MADE DONATION OF FOODSTUFFS TO PALESTINIAN RED CRESCENT IN BEIRUT AND THAT SUPPLIES WOULD BE SENT WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS. LOCAL PLO OFFICE ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT SPECIAL LEVY OF ONE WEEK'S PAY BEING DEDUCTED FROM SALARIES OF ALL PALESTINIANS WORKING IN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR AND THAT LEVY APPROVED BY AND WOULD BE COLLECTED IN COOPERATION WITH CONCERNED GOQ AUTHORITIES. ACCORDING LOCAL PLO, MONEY IS TO BE USED FOR COMPELLING NEEDS AND TO "PRESERVE RESISTANCE OF LEBANESE AND PALESTINIAN

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PEOPLE IN RESPONSE TO GENERAL APPEAL BY ARAFAT."

6. DURING JAN 11 MEETING WITH GOQ MINISTER OF INFORMATION KAWARI, AMBASSADOR OBSERVED THAT "AL ARAB" APPEAL FOR QATARI CONTRIBUTIONS FOR LEBANESE LEFTISTS WAS INFLAMMATORY AND CONFESSIONAL IN NATURE, AND THAT THIS COULD HARDLY HELP LEBANESE SITUATION; IT APPEARED THAT QATARIS WERE BEING ENCOURAGED TO TAKE SIDES IN LEBANESE CONFLICT. KAWARI CONCURRED. HE ACKNOW-

LEDGED THAT LOCAL PRESS OPERATED WITHIN GUIDELINES SET BY MINISTRY OF INFORMATION; HE SAID HE INTENDED TO RAISE "AL ARAB'S" ONESIDED APPEAL DURING THIS WEEK'S MEETING OF PRESS GUIDANCE COMMITTEE, AND HE WOULD SEE TO IT THAT THIS DID NOT HAPPEN AGAIN.

7. AMBASSADOR ALSO RAISED WITH KAWARI PLO ANNOUNCEMENT ON LEBANESE SITUATION CARRIED BY LOCAL PRESS AND TELEVISION AND REPORT OF AMIR'S DONATION TO PLO RED CRESCENT AS ANOTHER INDICATION THAT GOQ GIVING APPEARANCE OF TAKING SIDES IN LEBANESE CONFLICT. KAWARI STRONGLY DEMURRED. HE SAID GOQ'S SUPPORT OF PALESTINIANS IN CONTEXT OF LEBANESE CRISIS CONNECTED ONLY WITH HARDSHIP CAUSED THEM BY BLOCKADE OF TEL -'TAR CAMP. (COMMENT: IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR, AMIR HIMSELF REGISTERED STRONG ADVERSE CRITICISM OF BLOCKADE (SEPTTEL).

8. COMMENT: LOCAL FEELINGS ON LEBANESE CRISIS BEING STIRRED UP AS SITUATION DETERIORATES FURTHER. WE BELIEVE GOQ SINCERELY WISHES TO MAINTAIN NEUTRAL AND NON-INTERFERENCE STANCE, BUT QATARIS LIKELY TO BE ATTRACTED BY APPEALS FOR SUPPORT OF MUSLIM CORELIGIONARIES. MUCH BITTERNESS HAS ALSO DEVELOPED LOCALLY BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE EXPATRIATES HERE, DEPENDING ON CONFESSION OR POLITICAL PERSUASION, AND EACH GROUP HAS PRESSED ITS VIEWS ON RESPECTIVE QATARI ASSOCIATES, WITH RESULTING EFFECTS ON WHOLE COMMUNITY. SITUATION ADDS INCREASINGLY SOUR ELEMENT TO ATMOSPHERE ON THIS TIGHT LITTLE PENINSULA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, REFUGEE CAMPS, CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DOHA00041
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760011-1099
From: DOHA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760163/aaaacebn.tel
Line Count: 143
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <30 SEP 2004 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: QATARI REACTION TO CURRENT SITUATION IN LEBANON
TAGS: PFOR, XF, QA, LE, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006